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The Alternatives in American Foreign Policy

A radio discussion over WGN and the Mutual Broadcasting System

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The Alternatives in

American Foreign Policy

MR. MCBURNEY: Our speakers today are James A. Eldridge, Midwest Director of the American Association for the United Nations; Frank L. Hughes, reporter and writer for *The Chicago Tribune*, and author of the recent book, *Prejudice and the Press*; and Franklin D. Scott, Professor of History at Northwestern University.

Now, gentlemen, what are the alternatives in our foreign policy, as you see them? Scott, would you speak to that first?

'Struggle or Perish'

MR. SCOTT: The alternatives, as I see them, McBurney, are very unpleasant, but very simple. They are struggle or perish, cooperation or disintegration, action or inaction.

To my mind, when you choose—as we must choose—the program of struggle and cooperation and action, then we have various other choices within that. Are we going to act by a policy of imperialism and dictatorship, or are we going to act by a policy of cooperation with those whose interests are the same as ours?

MR. MCBURNEY: Do you accept that analysis, Hughes?

MR. HUGHES: I agree with Professor Scott that our alternatives are unpleasant, but I think they lie in two directions. The first is to continue this policy of internationalism that we have pursued in all crises for the last thirty-five years, and the second is to reorient our thinking around a really American foreign policy.

To do that I would suggest, first, we get rid of all Communists in our government, and bar people who have had any affiliation with Communist front movements from ever holding a government job. Second, to get our military forces out of Europe, to get

out of Korea now, to occupy only the strategic air and naval bases that the military selects, and to offer arms and munitions only to the potential allies in Europe who demonstrate a wholehearted will to fight Communism.

We'll fight and fight only when the existence of the United States as a sovereign nation is threatened, and that should be decided by the Congress and not by the President.

MR. MCBURNEY: That gives us the position of Scott and Hughes. Eldridge, where do you stand?

'Vigorous Policy'

MR. ELDRIDGE: I join with Professor Scott in the idea that at the present time we must choose either action or inaction. I choose action along certain clearly defined lines—a vigorous American foreign policy.

I emphatically disagree with Mr. Hughes, that a policy of internationalism has brought us to our present position and problems.

MR. MCBURNEY: I wonder whether or not that is the case. How have we managed to get ourselves into the present difficult situation? What mistakes have we made, Hughes?

MR. HUGHES: I believe our mistakes started when we entered the first World War to settle Europe's quarrels. They continued when we entered the second World War. That has brought us to the crisis of a third World War. If we had stayed out of that first hassel, I don't think we'd be in the position that we are in today.

MR. SCOTT: Of course, this assumes that we really have followed a policy of internationalism for a long period of time. Perhaps the trouble is that

we have waited too long in the case of each crisis preceding this, and have not engaged in a real international policy until after it was too late, until after other great nations of the earth had so locked horns that we were in such a dilemma that it was almost impossible to get out of it except by disaster.

MR. ELDRIDGE: I'd like to go on record as disagreeing with Mr. Hughes' point of view that, in the first World War, we went in to settle Europe's quarrels, and I also say that we didn't go into the second World War for such a purpose.

Apparently Mr. Hughes wants a foreign policy consistent with the best interests of this country, and I say that we participated in both world wars because the self-interests of this country were directly involved.

'Stay Out of War'

MR. HUGHES: Of course, I disagree with that, Eldridge. I think that in the first World War, if we had stayed out of it, the war would have ended in a hurry, and the unbalance of power in Europe that has been set up through that war would not exist. Similarly, if we had stayed out of the second World War, we might have had two totalitarian dictatorships fighting each other, or maybe in an armed truce, but we wouldn't have to face one dominant one, as we do today.

MR. MCBURNEY: I'm going to stop this rather interesting discussion. It's perfectly clear to me that we could explore these historical matters for the rest of the time available to us. I think these preliminaries do help to identify our positions and our attitudes. Scott?

MR. SCOTT: May I add one thing before we leave this subject completely? There is implicit in the discussion we have had the idea that the United States is primarily responsible for what has happened. I react violently against that whole idea. It seems to me that the forces which have created trouble in the world in the 20th Cen-

tury have been, for the most part, outside the United States, that really the difficulty stems from Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, Communism in Russia, and the attempt at Communist revolution throughout the world.

The United States, rightly or wrongly, has been put on the defensive. We have not instigated trouble; we have merely, from time to time, attempted to avoid it, and to recover from it.

MR. HUGHES: Got into trouble, you might say.

MR. MCBURNEY: I think we would all accept that larger interpretation of the causes that have been at work, but let's get on to what is probably our most important question here: What are the factors determining future policy, however we may have gotten into the present situation? Who are our enemies today, and how united are they, Scott?

'Two-Headed Enemy'

MR. SCOTT: It seems to me the enemy can be identified very easily. I think I would put it in the singular. Our enemy is Russian Communism, Russian Communism that is two-headed. It is the old nationalist Russia, Tsarist imperialism, on the one hand; on the other hand, it is the new Communist ideology which seeks for world revolution.

Now, stemming from Moscow, then, we have this enmity spreading itself throughout the world, through the satellite states of Russia, through the other regions of Asia and of the New World, but the head of the whole organization seems to be in Moscow.

MR. HUGHES: I agree with what Professor Scott says about our enemy being Communism, but I think it is a world Communism rather than a Russian Communism; and I think we had a part in it, in the establishment of it as a nation, when we first recognized Soviet Russia in the early 1930's. That, I think, was one of our greatest international mistakes.

MR. ELDRIDGE: I would like to speak to

two points here. First of all, I quite agree with Dr. Scott that we face two clear-cut issues. The one is the revival of the old Russian imperialism, and the fact that it can today exercise a certain stretching out because of the destruction of the balance of power by the second World War. I also agree that Russia comes today as the Marxists' spokesman. I think the two problems require two different answers—one, a program of military coalition to hold against Russian expansion, and as far as international Communism is concerned, I think we have to hit it head-on, with economic cooperation, with certain programs that will set back the Communist revolution.

I disagree with Mr. Hughes' thesis that our recognition of the Soviet Union placed her in this strategic position. I think that the factors of history and the factors of the 20th Century that Dr. Scott spoke of earlier made Russia's preeminence today inevitable.

MR. MCBURNEY: You men keep referring to a two-headed monster with which we are concerned here—Russian imperialism on the one hand and international Communism on the other. Now, do those two heads always look in the same direction, Scott?

Arms and Infiltration

MR. SCOTT: Probably not, but the way they hide behind the veils or the "Iron Curtains" of the East makes it a little difficult to tell, sometimes, which is which.

Actually, it looks a little bit as if the main motive force at the present is a Russian imperialism, but that this Russian imperialism is using not only force of arms—in fact, not at all the force of arms of Russian armies themselves, for they haven't yet directly come into action—but that Russian imperialism is using as its means an infiltration, ideologically and through the working classes and affiliated parties in various other countries, in order to create confusion, and in order to be ready for the social revolution when and if it may come.

MR. ELDRIDGE: Since our subject here, McBurney, is "Alternatives in American Policy," I think that we ought to look very carefully at this idea that Dr. Scott has set forth, because certainly it is in our best interests at the moment to break up, if possible, in some way, the strength of the coalition that Russia is amassing. I think it can be demonstrated in lots of places that this may be happening.

I think Titoism in Yugoslavia, I think certain relations between Mao in China and Stalin, demonstrate increasingly that there are coming conflicts between the international Communist movements and the Russian national interests. Repeatedly, particularly of recent months, Stalin has placed the emphasis on the best interests of Russia, and where he does, and where we can play to the nationalism of the satellite countries that are under Moscow, we should do it.

MR. HUGHES: I think it must not be overlooked, however, that Tito is still a Communist, and an orthodox Communist, just as Mao is, and I believe that while we're fighting Communism, we mustn't scatter our shots by distinguishing between good Communism and bad Communism.

Aggressors

MR. ELDRIDGE: We are not making a distinction between good Communism and bad Communism, Hughes, but we do, at the present moment, have to make the distinction between who is aggressing and who is not aggressing, and as long as Tito is willing to keep whatever form of government he is pursuing within Yugoslavia, I consider that his business.

The problem that you and I are up against is not that there is Communism in Russia, but the fact that Russia is attempting to impose something outside the borders of the Soviet Union. That we are opposed to.

MR. SCOTT: We are up against a very difficult dilemma, because Russia, through her Communism, through this international policy which she is pur-

suing, is making herself the leader of all reform movements. She is making herself and Communism the alternative to everything that has existed in the past which can be considered evil. We are, therefore, sometimes in danger of being put in the position of defending everything that has been, whether it's good or bad, and obviously, there have been some bad things in the past.

We are facing a social revolution in the world today. That is most obvious in China at the present moment; but it is clear throughout Asia; it is clear through much of Europe; and we cannot succeed if we identify ourselves wholly with the policy of reaction.

The United States, herself, has traditionally been a revolutionary force in the world, and up to a very large degree, the democracy of the United States, of our founding fathers, has succeeded in producing change throughout the rest of the world. We are hardly in a position yet to put ourselves in the position of simply standing pat on what exists.

MR. HUGHES: I would say only to Dr. Scott's remarks that I don't believe this nation is a democracy. It's a Republic.

MR. SCOTT: Well, I regard that issue as beside the point.

MR. ELDRIDGE: I do, too.

'Show Example'

MR. HUGHES: I think it is our business as a nation to hold up our system and form of government as an example, but I don't think that we ought to take part in any social revolutions elsewhere in the world.

It may be true that Russia does—in the minds of foreign people—stand for all that means progress and advancement, and that Communism carries that banner, but we know the true fact that it carries it under a banner of tyranny.

I think that our alternative is to show by our own government and our own form of economy, the true way for the rest of the world.

MR. SCOTT: I am glad to find one thing on which I can agree with Mr. Hughes. I don't think that we need at the present moment to become outright leaders of social revolution in other countries. I agree that our primary job is to make our own system work so well that other people will want to adapt themselves thereto. So far, I can go along with Mr. Hughes, I am glad to say.

MR. ELDRIDGE: Well, I can go with Mr. Hughes and Mr. Scott both on the fact that I want the conduct of this democracy—or this Republic, whichever we choose to call it—to be an example to the rest of the world, but I also think that there are given areas where we are going to have to help in the social revolution.

If you took Mr. Hughes' thesis, Mr. Hughes would probably have rejected French assistance in 1776, and specifically, at the moment, there is an issue at hand, I think, in the problems of India, where there is a great social revolution going on, where we should assist with food, with wheat.

Humanitarian Policy

MR. SCOTT: We should assist, but shouldn't we assist for humanitarian reasons, not for the purpose of building a particular party or policy?

MR. ELDRIDGE: I agree, but I think we have that in mind. For example, I think Mr. Hoover's idea of going along with the Truman proposal of wheat for India is a humanitarian position. At the same time, realistically and politically, we realize that if something isn't done about hunger and poverty in India, the Communists in India are going to work on that hunger and poverty.

MR. SCOTT: That is right, but the advantage of this whole thing is that it all works together. If we can prove to a country like India—and, therefore, to all the world—that we have the resources and we have the will to aid, regardless of political purposes, then we have one of the strongest arguing points possible for democracy's team.

MR. McBURNEY: We have been talking about our enemies, and just how united they are. Who are our friends, Hughes, and how strong are they? Do you share General Eisenhower's optimism about Western Europe?

MR. HUGHES: No, I do not. I think, with Mr. Hoover, that a strong will to fight Communism ought to be demonstrated by our potential allies.

McCarran Report

I had my attention called to a Senate report the other day—I believe it was Senator McCarran who brought it in—pointing out that there is, in some parts of Europe, a disaffection with the idea of fighting Communism. Now, it may be that this report is not complete, but I don't think that we have any present showing of strength against Communism that we should reward by sending our men to Europe.

MR. SCOTT: I think we have an evidence of will, at least. This particular report, made to and through Senator McCarran, is an interesting example of how some individuals and some groups attempt to mislead public opinion. Only late in that article, and hidden, was the admission made that the investigation covered only certain countries in the North Atlantic states, and did not include either Britain or the Scandinavian countries. In other words, it excluded just those countries where Communism has been most successfully conquered; it covered only those countries where it is still most rife. That is an unfair kind of balance.

MR. ELDRIDGE: I would like to take up one point Mr. Hughes made. He said there was a disaffection to the idea of fighting Communism. I think it is more accurate to say—and I believe you will agree if you view the destruction of two wars in Europe in the last thirty years—that there is a disaffection with the idea of fighting at the present time or at any time. Europe is tired, extremely tired, and I think that we Americans, who are well fed and who are secure and

have a high standard of living, should have some consideration for the fact that Europe's recovery has been different.

But I would like to go a bit further. I am not ashamed to say that one of the reasons I want to go to the support of Europe is based upon something that I can't prove by statistics, but it is a faith. Europe represents Western civilization. Europe represents everything that has come down in the Greek and Hebraic tradition, through the Christian tradition of the last two thousand years. Europe has contributed to the West the existence of a social and a political order that has led to the freedom, dignity and integrity of the individual; and I, as an American, in 1951, am willing to take a gamble on that faith in what Europe represents.

MR. HUGHES: I share your faith in Europe to an extent, but by the same token I want to call attention to the fact that many governments of Europe have moved so far to the left that they can almost be identified with Communism.

George Bernard Shaw himself, just before he died, called the British Fabian movement true Communism. He said that he was among the spiritual leaders of world Communism, and I think, as you pointed out, Eldridge, the people of Europe are tired. They don't want to fight, and until they do show the willingness to fight Russia, and show it heavily, we would be foolish to send ground troops over there.

Western Europe

MR. McBURNEY: Hughes has raised precisely the question that I wanted to put to you, Scott: Can the interests of these countries of Western Europe be sufficiently polarized to achieve strong, united cooperation with us?

MR. SCOTT: I think they are coming.

MR. McBURNEY: Hughes thinks not, obviously.

MR. SCOTT: There is no question that they are reluctant to fight, as we are

reluctant to fight. It is a tragedy that the decisions in this conflict in the world can't be reached by other means than by fighting, but when the other fellow is armed to the teeth and will not listen to the arguments of reason, it's a little difficult to apply any method but fighting; at least man has not yet discovered how to do it.

The Western Europeans, in general, I believe, realize that as keenly as do the Americans. Perhaps the chief difference between Western Europe and the United States in this regard is that Western Europe realizes that she will be the battleground. Western Europeans do not want to see their countries devastated and then reconquered. We can hardly blame them for that. Therefore, they want—before they commit themselves, before they spend vast sums of money on armament—to be absolutely sure that they are going to have the support of the United States immediately on the outbreak of conflict, not after they have fought and bled and been devastated for a year or two, as happened in World War I and as happened in World War II.

If they can count on American support from the beginning, I think they will really have the will to fight.

Military Budget

A recent report from France indicates what the French have been doing. There is a strong Communist party in France, but the majority there are definitely non-Communist. The French have agreed to a budget for 1951 of \$7,471,000,000, of which almost one-third goes for military purposes. That is an extremely high percentage. It is an extremely high sum of money for a France which has already been devastated and which is still reconstructing from the last war.

Other countries show a similar willingness to participate to the extent of their ability.

MR. HUGHES: Isn't it true, though, Dr. Scott, that while the French military budget may be a third, our

budget is about 55 per cent for military purposes?

MR. SCOTT: Not for direct and immediate military expenses; no. It's much less than that. Proportionately, it is less than the French have.

MR. MCBURNEY: In pursuing this policy you gentlemen are discussing, to what extent should it be identified with the United Nations? You have made a commitment in that direction, I know, Eldridge.

MR. ELDRIDGE: Well, of course, if I have any disagreement with American foreign policy in the last five years, it is on those occasions when the United States has bounced off, unilaterally, in various directions, and not followed the course of the United Nations.

I think, first of all, that we accepted, at San Francisco, an international commitment in the charter of the United Nations, and if another country, the Soviet Union, chooses to violate this, it doesn't relieve the rest of the nations of the obligation they assumed.

More than that, I think that the United Nations, where we have pursued the United Nations course, where we have used the pattern of the United Nations, where we have followed the principle of collective security in the United Nations in the last five years, we have succeeded.

MR. HUGHES: I think the principle of collective security is bankrupt. It is true we accepted a commitment in the United Nations at San Francisco, but we did it in an atmosphere of deceit. The United Nations has proved to be nothing except a debating society, where our statesmen and our principles are excoriated by people like Vishinsky. I think we ought to get out of the United Nations, and we ought to get out now.

'Cooperation Best Policy'

MR. SCOTT: Well, with regard to that particular issue, I would say that American policy should be, certainly, American policy, first and foremost.

The responsibility of the American people and the American government is primarily to the United States and its people. On the other hand, our own aims can best be attained through cooperation with the other peoples and the other states of the earth, not by independent action on our own.

The United Nations has not been all that we had hoped to see it, but it has been something, and it has for the first time in history taken united action immediately and vigorously, as in Korea last July, against a common aggressor.

'Three Points'

With regard to the present moment, there are just three points that I think specifically ought to be mentioned with regard to our own foreign policy.

First, with regard to Korea, we must stay until and unless the cost of staying becomes excessive. Then we should withdraw.

Second, with regard to Red China's admission to the United Nations, we cannot admit Red China as long as she is pursuing a policy of aggression. When and if the Chinese Red Government assumes the responsibilities and the principles of the United Nations, then admit her.

Third, with regard to Western Europe, aid her in her economy and her defense as long as the common interest demands it.

MR. MCBURNEY: That gives us Scott's program. What is yours, Hughes?

MR. HUGHES: Mine is simple. Get rid of the Communists and fellow travelers in our government. Sign peace treaties with the conquered nations. Withdraw our military forces from Europe, and send them munitions when they show a will to fight. Build the greatest air force in this nation that the world has ever seen. Guard our

own resources and treasure, as Mr. Hoover says we must. Cut non-military spending by the federal government exactly in half this year, and next year let's cut it in half again. Get out of the United Nations, and get out now.

MR. ELDRIDGE: I would like to say that Mr. Hughes has made a great point of serving the best interests of the United States in his foreign policy, and I want to go on record as saying that I reject this position because I emphatically do not think it will serve the best interests of the United States.

'World of Interaction'

MR. SCOTT: I'm afraid that Eldridge is correct on that point. We live in a world of interaction and interrelationships; we cannot live isolated and by ourselves.

Mr. Hoover thinks that we still have moats around us. Yes, we do have moats that are probably defensible by the Air Force and by the Navy, but we cannot thus defend ourselves against ideas.

MR. HUGHES: I think Mr. Hoover made a good point when he said that atom bombs do not transport troops. Our experience in Korea has shown how effective moats can be.

MR. ELDRIDGE: I would like to say that in discussing the question of what you can do in Korea and what you can do with the Soviet Union in a military sense, you have two different problems. I am not qualified to discuss either one of them, but I again return to the main thesis that in the 20th Century, the historical forces, all the things that have happened in the 20th Century growing out of centuries before, demand that there must be in our time some form of international organization and some form of international cooperation.





Suggested Readings

Compiled by Eugen Eisenlohr
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Deering Library, Northwestern University.



Commentary 10:334-41, O., '50. "How to Checkmate Stalin in Asia: An American Policy Geared to Chinese Realities." K. A. WITTOGEL.

Our past mistakes in China must not be repeated in the rest of Asia if democracy is to win its case.

Commonweal 53:315, Ja. 5, '51. "Our Isolationists."

Three factors as to why American isolationists must realize that they cannot continue in their desire to remain aloof from the rest of the world.

Foreign Policy Bulletin 30:1-2, Ja. 5, '51. "Middle Course Emerging from Foreign Policy Debate." V. M. DEAN.

U. S. may follow a policy of recognition of our world obligations but must be wary of undertaking more than we can manage.

Foreign Policy Bulletin 30:1-2, Ja. 12, '51. "Debate Reopens Historic U. S. Foreign Policy Issues." V. M. DEAN.

A critical summary of Taft's foreign policy speech and a probing of the question "Should U. S. Negotiate?"

Foreign Policy Bulletin 30:1-3, S. 8, '50. "How Can U. S. Contribute to a U. N. Peace in Asia?"

Harper's Magazine 201:47-53, D., '50. "Calculated Risk in Yugoslavia." H. C. WOLFE.

Although aiding Tito may have certain moral and military risks we must carefully weigh the alternatives in not doing so.

Life 30:10-14, Ja. 8, '51. "Troubled Nation Weighs Its Future."

The alternatives in American foreign policy are discussed.

Nation 172:4, Ja. 6, '51. "American Neutralism; Hoover's Speech."

Hoover's program appeals to emotions and if caught up by the nation might end in appeasement of Communism and America's downfall.

New York Times Magazine p. 9+, D. 3, '50. "In the Long Run Europe Is Our First Front." N. PEFFER.

Europe not Asia should become America's first concern in its foreign policy.

Newsweek 37:27, Ja. 22, '51. "Congress and Europe." E. K. LINDLEY.

Conclusions drawn from the present debate in Congress as to the trend in our foreign policy and military strategy.

Newsweek 37:21, Ja. 15, '51. "World Strategy: Summary of Address to the Senate." R. A. TAFT.

Senator Taft recommends a new U.N. without Russia, aid to Chiang Kai-shek, economic aid and arms to nations fighting Communism, but no American land armies to be sent out of the country.

Newsweek 37:10-12, Ja. 1, '51. "Foreign Policy: What To-Do Debate."

The highlights of the foreign policy debate from the standpoints of Hoover, Acheson, the military men, as well as the press, are presented.

Political Science Quarterly 65:481-501, D., '50. "How Far Should America Interfere?" R. ALBRECHT-CARRIE.

Our commitments abroad must be faced. Only through a secure Europe can we, the United States, be secure.

Scholastic 57:13, Ja. 3, '51. "U. S. Foreign Policy."

Three schools of thought on the subject of what American foreign policy should be, expressed by Hoover, Patterson and Truman and Acheson.

Time 57:15-18, Ja. 22, '51. "Fin of the Shark."

A summary of Senator Douglas' speech in Congress in which he weighs the alternatives in the shaping of our foreign policy.

Time 57:10-14, Ja. 8, '51. "Fatal Flaw?"

A penetrating study on the State Department and Secretary Acheson past to present. The policies that have brought the U. S. to the crisis in Korea are revealed.

Time 57:9-10, Ja. 1, '51. "Out of the Grave: Isolationism."

Colonel McCormick sides with Hoover in the building of the Western Hemisphere into the "Gibraltar of Civilization."

United States News and World Report 30:16-17, Ja. 19, '51. "Which Way or U. S.: The Choice."

Hoover, Taft and Truman offer alternatives in our foreign policy.

United States News and World Report 30:60, Ja. 12, '51. "What Would You Do?" D. LAWRENCE.

Alternate proposals are given toward formulating our foreign policy.

United States News and World Report 29:13-15, S. 8, '50. "America's Real Policy Abroad."

A series of questions and answers regarding our foreign policy.



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